

Jason Godin
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Appropriations – DDS

My name is Jason Godin, and I am a group home worker at the Caring Community, which receives its funding from DDS. I am also a member of SEIU 1199. I am here to urge you to reject cuts in the Governor's budget to DDS.

I have worked at Caring Community for about five years, at a group home in Eastern Connecticut with five residents. I love the work I do. My co-workers and I work hard to provide high-quality care to our residents.

The work that we do is threatened by a lack of funding. This hurts us as workers, and the residents we care for. It feels like every year, more work is put on us, without more staff or hours to make up the difference. We are often working short-staffed, which is unsafe for us and our residents. The problem with understaffing is widespread throughout our agency, which means that sometimes workers from our house are pulled to work at other houses, leaving our house short. Sometimes, when someone calls out of work, the shift is left empty, or only some of the open hours are filled. We have one resident who is supposed to be in our line of sight when using the restroom, yet at night, there is just one staff for all five residents, making this impossible. Sometimes, we aren't able to take our residents on recreational outings, because we are understaffed. This isn't fair to the people who we are serving.

The cost of family insurance is over \$450/month, which is unaffordable for most of my co-workers. Out of about 200 full-time workers, only about 24 participate in the family health insurance. Many are forced to rely on Husky to cover their children. This is unfair to us as workers, but also is a huge cost to the state. Our wage scale hasn't been raised in nearly ten years. This is a huge problem for us as workers, but also for our residents. The low wages cause high turnover in the agency, which creates disruption and anxiety for our residents.

If the budget for DDS is cut further, we as workers will suffer, but our residents will suffer more. I'm here today to tell DDS that we need full funding for all of the services we provide. Whether in the public or private sector, all of our residents deserve to live in homes that are adequately funded and staffed. And, all of us who do this work deserve to be paid a living wage.

I ask you to work with us to help us continue to provide the care our residents deserve, and to improve the quality of our jobs. Instead of further cuts, we need more funding for DDS.